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TOWARD A PEACEFUL WORLD
FREE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS
AN EXHIBIT FROM THE HIROSHIMA PEACE PARK MUSEUM, JAPAN

-Report-

October 1997

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"TOWARD a PEACEFUL WORLD FREE of NUCLEAR WEAPONS"

An Exhibit from the Hiroshima Peace Park Museum, Japan

REPORT

HIROSHIMA-NAGASAKI EXHIBIT

HELD IN TORONTO, ONTARIO

METRO HALL ROTUNDA

OCTOBER 25th to NOVEMBER 1st, 1997.

Submitted by

Shirley Farlinger,

United Nations Association of Canada, Toronto Chapter,

Exhibit Program Co-ordinator

"This is our cry. This is our prayer. Peace in the world."
-- a plea from the school children of Hiroshima, Japan, Aug. 6, 1995.

This Exhibit commemorating the 52nd Anniversary of the founding of the United Nations is sponsored by the Defence Research and Education Centre, Toronto Chapter of the United Nations Association of Canada, Peace and Conflict Society of the University of Toronto, and Science for Peace.
Charitable Registration # BN 11922 9623 RR0001

Outline of planning for Hiroshima/Nagasaki Exhibit, Toward a Peaceful World Free of Nuclear Weapons, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

A Committee of volunteers was formed.

A decision was taken as to the best time of year - Disarmament Week and the anniversary of the founding of the United Nations (Oct. 24) The Exhibit ran from October 25 to November l, 1997

A search was begun for the best location. We wanted to have a site that would be visited by a regular flow of downtown workers and visitors.
A budget of $15,000 was set and we determined to be self-financing.
We designed our own letterhead, posters and pamphlets.
We were careful to take a balanced approach, not to be "political" and to look more to the future and what people can do today. It was stressed that this was an educational event.

The sponsoring organizations were the Defence, Research and Education Centre associated with Veterans Against Nuclear Arms, Science for Peace, the United Nations Association of Canada, Toronto Chapter, Soka Gakkai International, a Japanese peace organization and all contributed to the funding except for the United Nations. The funding was put through DREC so that donors could receive a charitable receipt. Efforts to involve the student Peace and Conflict Society and the University of Toronto Chair of Peace Studies were unsuccessful.

The duties of the committee were divided into:
- Treasurer
- Secretary and in charge of peace groups
- Opening and Closing Program organizer and chair of meetings
- Faith vigils and entertainment organizer
- School groups organizer

An assistant was hired who mainly worked on media.

We met monthly until two months ahead when we met weekly. Good fellowship developed in the committee as we recounted our successes (and failures) each week. The media were almost totally absorbed by the election of a new mayor and megacity council and the teachers' strike.

Two fund-raising events were held
The first was a pot luck dinner five weeks ahead with invited speaker Dr. Alan Phillips of Physicians for Global Survival. We served a large birthday cake decorated to honor the 52nd anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and sang "Happy Birthday".
The second was a dessert and coffee evening held at a local church as a kick-off the night before the opening. The speaker, Dr. Ursula Franklin, was a prominent University Professor of Metallurgy and Earth Sciences, a Quaker and peace and community activist. An outline in black, the exact size of the Nagasaki bomb, was hung on the wall and people invited to cover it with their post-it peace messages.

Successful applications were made to several funding sources including the John Holmes Fund of the Canadian government. Envelopes requesting a donation were handed out at every opportunity.

The School Groups Organizer formed a sub-committee which met separately and put together a resource kit for teachers. This was to be given out to each teacher who booked a time for the class to tour the Exhibit. (Unfortunately a teachers' strike interfered with this but some classes did attend and the kits were distributed to interested teachers).

Tour guides from peace groups were trained to assist people who visited the Exhibit, to encourage them to take the pamphlets outlining the work of about 12 different peace groups, and to sign the Guest Book and add their comments about the Exhibit. They were also urged to invite people to sign the Abolition 2000 Petition to the Canadian House of Commons to negotiate a timebound convention by the Year 2000 to end all nuclear weapons. It was also a unique opportunity for peace group members to connect with each other and learn about each others' work. At least one member of VANA and another peace group were on hand during the whole exhibit.

The Rotunda of the Council of Metropolitan Toronto was the site chosen in downtown Toronto and was free of charge. The chairman of Metro Council, the Consul-General of Japan for Ontario, the President of Science for Peace, a former peacekeeper representing the United Nations Association of Canada and The Rev. Ronald A. Mosley, who first suggested the idea, were the principal speakers for the opening. The Soka Gakkai International organization supplied the material for the ribbon-cutting.

The opening ceremony was preceded by two choirs, one Filipino and one a Japanese children's choir in colourful "happy coats".
The Raging Grannies also performed special songs in their Granny outfits.
The Shevchenko Ukrainian Ensemble, mandolin orchestra and dancers performed after the ribbon-cutting. About 300 people attended. The event appeared on two news television stations that evening.

Exceptional efforts were made to interest the press in the Exhibit. We made up press kits but were hampered by the fact that we had no pictures of what exactly was in the exhibit to hand out ahead of time.
One program videoed the Exhibit, interviewed two people and showed it after the Exhibit had closed. We took our own video of all the events.
There was one-half hour program on radio as well as announcements.
We attempted to get all the free publicity we could and only found out later that if we had planned a year in advance we could have had more help from the local Metro government as we were really a multicultural event. (Toronto is said to be the world's most multicultural city).
Our plan to have the school classes fold peace cranes which would then be collected and sent to the global one-million peace crane effort was thwarted by the strike. We did have some peace cranes to decorate the site.

Entertainment was also provided on Sunday October 26 by a Taiwanese choir, a Jewish folk choir, a Russian choir and a 50-voice Mennonite choir of young people. At the closing ceremony there was a large Chinese Canadian choir, a folk guitarist who had written a peace song and taught it to the school children, another guitarist with an original song and a band from the Canadian Auto Workers' Union. A speaker talked of the struggle of the unions in their work for peace.

An important feature of the event was the nightly religious services and vigils. A great variety of faith groups were invited to design their own liturgy suitable for a closing each evening at 7 or 8 p.m. A native drummer performed the Song of Solidarity from the American Natives' initiative against the nuclear tests in the Nevada desert. Christian Anglican and United Church people, Quakers and Catholic sisters conducted vigils and there were Buddhist chants with incense. The quiet evenings seemed to be ideal for this form of worship and remembrance.

Of all the comments perhaps the best was "A very thought-provoking exhibit. Some of these photographs should be hung in every Defence Department around the world. It is horrifying to realize it could happen again."

In the Guest Book the comments were very complimentary. "Thanks for bringing a reality to life that seems distant to youth in Canada today. I think the pictures and poems were the most effective". "May your exhibit help business-concerned people to realize the insanity of nuclear development".

As people left the exhibit we gave them a pamphlet to thank them and to remind them of the Nobel Peace Prize recently won by Jody Williams and the Land Mines Coalition and that what has been done for land mines and chemical weapons, could be done for nuclear weapons.

We took the Exhibit down in two hours. The budget was kept down to $12,000 and was covered by donations.

Many people expected this to become an annual event. There are several other cities interested in having it. We are instead looking at how we might mount a copy of some of this exhibit and extend it to cover more of Canada's involvement in nuclear issues.

We recommend that other groups take on the showing of this amazing exhibit to as many people as possible, especially students who have never heard of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and know little about the effects of radiation, or the presence today of thousands of nuclear weapons and the continuing research to make more. Attracting people was a challenge but the more people we involved in the programs the more support we received.

Respectfully submitted,
Shirley Farlinger